

Why It Is

The reader will observe that we have given a good portion of regular editorial space this week to other matter, principally to a contribution by Brother Talley which you will find on editorial pages. We had intended to give it place on pages 14 and 15, but having on hand more than the usual amount of church news it was thought better to leave room for it also. Right here permit us to say that we are pleased to see church news keep up so well. We trust there may be no dearth in church news this season. It is an evidence of activity among our ministers and workers in general. Let us not relax our efforts but "keep at it" incessantly, and victory will be sure to crown our labors.

The contribution by Brother Talley is being published in tract form by the National Mission Board for use in our missions, tho it is also kept for sale at this office for general distribution. The tract is an exposition of the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel as understood and practiced by the Brethren church. We invite a careful reading of the tract, and if you desire copies for distribution they will be supplied from this office at the rate of fifty cents per hundred. We shall be glad to receive your order for any number of copies. The tract will be ready by the time this paper reaches our readers, and orders will be promptly filled. A liberal distribution of the tract will be a very practical way of doing missionary work. The tract is sent out in the hope that it may do much good.

Praying Out a Church Debt

"If you will give me four inches of rain, I will pay the church debt," said a rich farmer to an earnest church worker. The latter accepted the challenge, called around her the few men and women of faith in the village, and prayed for two days for rain. Then the clouds assembled, and the rain came—one inch, two inches, three, three and three quarters. At last the guage filled up to four, and the crops were saved. The wealthy farmer paid off the church debt as he had agreed, and a new method of liquidating these troublesome obligations had been illustrated. A short time since we had some thing to say about dancing out a church debt, a method which had been employed by a certain congregation; but here we have another plan, and as between the two, the latter is to be commended. There is no reason why Christian men and women who believe in God should not take all such matters to him, church debts, or debts and troubles of any kind. We believe that nothing pleases our Heavenly Father more than that unserved trust in him which leads us to lay at his feet all our troubles and perplexities, to come to him, as a little child to its mother, with all our distresses great or small. God is love, and it is the highest joy of love to comfort and bless others. "Cast all your care upon him who careth for you." "Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you." What precious promises these are, and what balm for all our wounds, what strength for all our weakness. But let us not forget that there must be common sense in prayer as well as in other matters. The prosperous farmer with his full graneries who prayed God to help a destitute neighbor was promptly reminded by his little boy that he could easily answer that prayer himself. Why should he bother God about it? Let him go to his fat crib and take the poor man a bushel of corn. So while you have the money in your pocket to pay your church debt or your pastor's salary, don't imagine that it can be paid with a prayer. There is reason to believe that the Lord doesn't approve of hoarding money. From his point of view it is a concrete manifestation of distrust. Go to the end of your resources, and then expect to see the Lord's hand.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

J. O. TALLEY

"I am in deep trouble. But in this busy world I suppose every one has his share of the unpleasant things consequent on loss and disappointments. But is there no remedy for the sick soul?"

Thus soliloquized Mr. Brown as he walked dejectedly along a street in the city, where the busy crowd surged in quest for gain. In the store windows was displayed every brilliant scheme for advertising the wares within, while overhead were offices of lawyers, insurance agents, and representatives of every conceivable design for money getting. He wended his way, he knew not where. He was attracted to the magnificent church edifice, lighted for service. It was Wednesday night prayer-meeting; he walked in and took a seat. There were present about forty or fifty persons, tho this church claimed a membership of several hundred. Of the choir who were paid to sing at this place on Sundays, not one was present, but several of them were singing this very night in the theater on H street. The pastor opened the service, leading the singing. "I must tell Jesus all of my trials, I can not bear these burdens alone." The words and the music made an impression on the mind of Mr. Brown which lasted all thru the service. After the song the pastor read from II Cor., 5th chapter: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself, by Jesus Christ, and hath given us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; not imputing their trespasses unto them: and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as tho God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." During the reading of the scripture a train of thoughts coursed rapidly thru his mind which did not lighten his burden in the least. For in the recent troubles which had come to him thru bereavement and disappointment, his heart had naturally turned to the church for the comfort which it seemed he would not get. In his heart he wondered if lawyer "Avaritia" who had recently, by process of law, ejected widow "Egenus" from her home because she could not pay the rich Mr. Avarus rent due him, owing to her being unable to get enough washing to do to support self and her dependent children and pay the rent, was reconciled to God. All belonged to the same church. Was it possible that they were all reconciled to God and not to one another? Was it possible for God to forgive their debts, when they would not forgive one another? He remembered the Master had said, "For if ye forgive not your brother, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you." To the man experiencing those peculiar troubles that leave sores that human sympathy can not heal, these problems clamored for solution. The pastor's remarks were good, but the prayers were mostly for blessings on the petitioners, which seemed distressingly selfish, with but little thought apparently of the great mind of God, the mind that notes the distress of His children, and hears the cry of the widow. The pastor spoke of the blessed state of the reconciled, but said nothing about *how that state was brought about*. The meeting closed and Mr. Brown strolled homeward, all the time thinking about the seeming all important matter of being "reconciled" to God thru Jesus. Among other questionings of the mind that would not down was, Where are the many members of the church? Many of them he knew were at the theater, and some of them were probably at a card party where dancing and late dinners with costly wine was being served. That Jesus preached repentance he well knew; but about theaters, cards, dancing and wine dinners? These were things that all the world indulged in and belonged to the world. Were these people reconciled? If so to what? Thus he reasoned within himself until slumber relieved the tired brain.

Next evening he walked along a street, deeply buried in the thoughts aroused by the words of the pastor the night before. In this mood, he reached a little mission church, where the pastor, Mr. Faustus, was preparing for the evening service. The door standing invitingly open, he walked in, and was kindly greeted by this servant of God, and in a few minutes they were earnestly engaged in conversation on the theme nearest the heart of both, i. e., the joys of religion that ought to be ours, but are not. The following conversation took place.

Mr. Brown: Now that we are both deeply concerned let me ask you *what* do you hope to accomplish in this mission, and *how* do you hope to accomplish it?

Mr. Faustus: We are here to save men from sin and consequent ruin by teaching them the will of God, for it is the will of God that men should be happy, and to be happy we must be reconciled to the will of God and have a conscience void of offense.

Mr. Brown: But may we know the will of God? and if so, how?

Mr. Faustus: Yes, Jesus lived out the will of God on the earth among men, and then left it to us in his gospel, sealed with his blood on the cross.

Mr. Brown: What do you consider the first step toward reconciliation to God?

Mr. Faustus: Jesus came preaching, "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Mark 1:14-22. And on the day of Pentecost, when the people said, "What shall we do?" Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye